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Media and Information Literacy

Quarter 2 – Module 12: Audio Information and Media

This instructional material was collaboratively developed and reviewed by educators from public and private schools, colleges, and or/universities. We encourage teachers and other education stakeholders to email their feedback, comments, and recommendations to the Department of Education at action@deped.gov.ph.

We value your feedback and recommendations.

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Lesson 1 Audio Information and Media

Have you ever listened to a radio drama? Most of the time, people tune in to this type of radio program because of the story. But there is more to the story that they narrate and the characters who put life to the story: it is how the sound designers insert background music perfectly and use sound effects appropriately.

In this lesson, you will be learning how audio information can be an influential form of media and how it can be used and applied for you to learn and absorb ideas and concepts better.

What is It

Audio Information and Media

Audio

Audio is defined as anything connected to sound, specifically when received, recorded, transferred, or duplicated (HarperCollins, n.d.). It is anything related to the documentation and transmission of sound (Cambridge University, n.d.). Audio is one of the resources of media and information, along with text, visual, and motion.

Audio Media and Audio Information

Audio Media refers to the media communication that uses audio equipment to report, document, and deliver information through the means of sound. It may also refer to audio formats such as analog tape cassettes, digital compact discs, and computer files containing audio. On the other hand, **audio information** is the file or sound created and transferred by using high fidelity waves that are heard through certain audio tools.

Types and Categories of Audio Information

There are several types of audio file:

- **Radio Broadcast** – the act of sending a live or recorded audio through radio waves meant for a large group of listeners
- **Music** – an artistic form of auditory communication incorporating instrumental or vocal tones in a structured and continuous manner
- **Sound Recording** – the encoding of any sound from the surroundings; the act or procedure of making a record of a certain sound (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)
- **Sound Clip/Sound Effect** – the sound, aside from dialogue and music, artificially made to create an effect in a movie, play, or other broadcast production (Oxford University, n.d.)
- **Audio Podcast** – an episodic series of digital audio or video file or recording that can be downloaded by a user from a website to a media player or computer to listen

Aside from knowing the various types of audio information, you must also learn the different ways of storing audio files:

- **Tape –** a magnetic tape sound recording format on which sound can be documented
- **Compact Disc –** a plastic-fabricated, circular tool on which audio, video, and other digital information is recorded, stored, and played back
- **USB Flash Drive -** an external hard disk drive, small enough to fit on a keychain, that can be plugged into the computer's USB port
- **Memory Card –** a small, flat flash drive used to save data such as audio files, pictures, texts, and videos for use on small, portable, or remote computing devices
- **Computer Hard Drive –** a secondary data storage device for saving digital data
- **Internet/Cloud –** a wide network of remote servers in the internet meant to operate as storage and retrieval of audio files and other computer data

Now, before we save our audio files, we need to consider first the numerous audio file formats:

- **MP3 (MPEG Audio Layer 3)** - a coding format for consumer audio, as well as a mean of sound sequence compression for the transmission and playback of music on most digital audio players
- **M4A/AAC (MPEG-4 Audio/Advanced Audio Coding**) - a file extension for lossy digital audio compression

- **WAV (Waveform Audio File Format)** - the Microsoft audio file format standard used for the storage of digital audio data on personal computers
- **WMA (Windows Media Audio)** - a file extension developed by Microsoft and used with Windows Media Player

A Friendly Reminder: Hearing vs. Listening

"Hearing is simply the act of perceiving sound by the ear. If you are not hearing-impaired, hearing simply happens. Listening, however, is something you consciously choose to do. Listening requires concentration so that your brain processes meaning from words and sentences. Listening leads to learning."
(University of Minnesota Duluth, 2011; Rosenblat, 2009)

Characteristics of a Sound

The following are the characteristics of sound:

- **Volume** - the force of a sound
- **Tone** - the musical or vocal sound of a definite quality (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)
- **Pitch** - the degree of highness or lowness of a sound (Oxford University, n.d.)
- **Loudness** - the feature of a sound that determines the degree of the auditory sensation produced (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)

Purposes of Using Sounds or Audio Media

Audio media have a vital role when it comes to the teaching and learning process. Some learners are auditory learners. These are learners who better understand lessons by listening to the content and concepts that they need to grasp. This is the reason why it is important to use audio media along with text and visual media since these will make the lessons more motivating for learners. The following are some of the purposes of using sounds or audio media in facilitating learning:

- These enable the learners to listen to the ideas and views of the experts and other reliable people;
- These allow learners to listen to learning materials, like speeches;
- These serve as alternative guides for the learners when they are doing their tasks, such as experiments; and
- These grant the learners audio files of important past events or sounds from the settings that the learners cannot personally visit.

Elements and Principles of Sound Design

Nowadays, sound is an essential part of any movie, play, or broadcast production. A well-created soundtrack makes the audience enjoy any dramatic presentation. Therefore, it is a must for us to know the elements and principles of sound design. It is important to get an understanding of what makes up an entire production soundtrack.

Sound Design is the vivid use of sound during a production in connection to the images and contents of the story to create an emotional response. These are the

elements of sound design or the elements that one must work with to produce soundtracks:

- **Dialogue** – a composition in the form of conversation between two people
- **Sound Effect** - the sound, aside from dialogue and music, artificially made to create an effect in a movie, play, or broadcast production (Oxford University, n.d.)
- **Music** - an instrumental or a vocal sound that conveys emotions and ideas in significant forms through the elements of color, harmony, melody, and rhythm
- **Silence** – the complete absence of noise or sound

Aside from these elements that one must work with in creating a soundtrack, principles of sound design, or the audio techniques for merging the various elements or objects of sound design, should also be considered:

- **Mixing** – the balance, combination, and control of numerous sound elements
- **Pace** – the editing and the time control of sound design; it has numerous categories:
  - **Linear** – the sounds that are permanent, used once, and will be in the same place
  - **Non-Linear** – the sounds that are much more open in comparison to linear sounds
  - **Multi-Linear**
- **Transition** – the process of getting from one element or fragment of sound design to another; it has various types:
  - **Segue** – an uninterrupted movement from one piece of music to another
  - **Cross-Fade** – the smooth transition of a sound between two side by side audio files on the same track
  - **V-Fade** – a switch from one volume level to another softer or louder level
  - **Fade to Black** – a type of V-Fade which has some silence between the elements of sound design
- **Stereo Imaging** - the feature of sound documentation and duplication concerning the supposed spatial locations of the sound sources, both sideways and in depth.